

Abingdon - Riverside - Emmorton Community Area

Community Character

The Abingdon-Riverside-Emmorton Community Area is located between Winters Run on the west and Bynum Run, James Run, and Grays Run on the east, generally south of Plumtree and Patterson Mill Roads, bounded by Otter Point Creek and Bush River. The majority of this community is included within the Development Envelope. Due to this, this area of once large land tracts and farms now contains a mix of low, medium, and high density single family homes, garden apartments, townhomes, and condominiums. Retail areas and community and neighborhood centers are located at Constant Friendship, the Festival at Bel Air, Box Hill, and Riverside. Significant office and industrial nodes exist at the Riverside Business Park, Box Hill South Corporate Center and Waters Edge Corporate Campus. Waters Edge, located along the scenic Bush River, is part of a 200+ acres mixed use development that includes executive waterfront housing, office and professional centers. The site features state-of-the-art office and technical facilities and major hotel and waterfront restaurant opportunities are provided. Only a few significant parcels and some in-fill areas remain for development in the Abingdon-Riverside-Emmorton Community.

Historic sites and structures representing key events in the history of the County and of the Country survive in Bush, Abingdon, and Belcamp. Old Philadelphia Road evolved from an Indian trail to a major transportation route between the north and south during the Colonial period. Harford Town, or Bush, which was the first County Seat, was a social and political center at the time of the Revolutionary War, as well as the site of the signing of the Bush Declaration – the first “Declaration of Independence” signed by a representative body in America – in 1775. A few miles west of Harford Town, Abingdon was laid out in 1779 and became a center for education, religion, industry, and crafts. The original layout of the town can be discerned from existing roads, and a number of sites and structures identified in the County's historic inventory. A few large tracts of undeveloped land remain in the vicinity, which helps preserve some of the original natural and rural character.

The Abingdon-Riverside-Emmorton community contains a mix of stream valley areas, with landforms being equally split between the Coastal Plain and Piedmont physiographic areas. The major watershed is Winters Run, which is shared by six other Community Areas. The Bynum Run watershed is also significant, and its waters, as well as those of Winters Run, flow into Bush River, and eventually into the Chesapeake Bay. These watersheds currently deliver large amounts of sediment and nutrients to the Bush River. A Bush River Watershed Management Plan has been completed by the County, and lays out a plan of action to improve the overall conditions in the Bush River watershed. There are two major natural areas, Harford Glen Environmental Education Center and the Bush Declaration Natural Resources Area, which are protected through public ownership. These remnants of nature are important symbols of Harford County, and must be protected even as lands adjacent to them are being developed. The 1,000-foot ribbon of land along the Bush River and Church Creek is part of the County's designated Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. Church Creek Pond, located along Route 40, is home to a State endangered plant. Other threatened and endangered plant

species are found throughout the wetland complexes in the headwaters of Bush River and Church Creek. The Critical Area Program protects these designated Habitats of Local Significance.

The Abingdon-Riverside-Emmorton Community Area has experienced significant growth and change in the last 10 to 20 years. The community is served by two fire stations. There are currently four elementary schools located within the community area (Emmorton, Abingdon, William S. James, and Church Creek). Additionally, some Abingdon households are within the William Paca - Old Post Elementary School district which is located just outside the community area on Philadelphia Road (MD Route 7). Based on the October 2003 amendment to the Annual Growth Report, these schools are all operating at less than the APF standards for capacity. Middle and high school aged students in this community attend schools in Bel Air, Edgewood or Aberdeen. The schools in Aberdeen and Edgewood are operating at less than capacity; however, Bel Air High School is operating near capacity and is expected to exceed capacity. A middle school/high school complex is planned in the Patterson Mill Road/MD Route 924 vicinity and will lessen the capacity strains on secondary schools. The Harford Glen Environmental Education Center is an integral part of the Harford County Public Schools system and offers a curriculum that promotes awareness and understanding of the local and global environment.

Alice and William Longley Park, Bynum Run Conservation Areas, Belcamp Park, and Hollywoods Park serve the open space needs of the community. The Emmorton Recreation and Tennis Center, a multipurpose indoor recreation facility, is also located with this community area. Although outside of the community, the Lyn Stacie Getz Park and Anita Leight Estuary Center also service this area. The proposed Cedar Day Park soccer complex, located at MD Route 136 and MD Route 543 will serve both county-wide and community needs. In addition, there are numerous open spaces scattered within subdivisions; however, they are only available to Homeowner's Association members, not to the general public. Post offices are located in Abingdon in the Box Hill Shopping Center and on U.S. 40 near Waters Edge in Belcamp. A branch of the Harford County Library is located on Tollgate Road near Emmorton Elementary School and contains public open space. The Harford County Public Library administrative and support services office is located inside the Riverside Business Park on Brass Mill Road near MD Route 543.

The 2000 census shows that the Abingdon-Riverside-Emmorton Community had a population of 38,831, which is approximately 18% of the County's total population (Figure 43). This community is the fastest growing community in the County. Between 1990 and 2000, the population of the area increased by 91.48% (18,552 people). The population in every age category saw an increase of over 100%, except the 0-4 and 20-34 year old age groups. These groups increased by over 69% and 32 % respectively. A common trend throughout the County is the aging population. In Abingdon-Riverside-Emmorton, the population of the 50 and over age group increased by 172% (from 2,528 to 6,882). This may be due in part to the influx of apartments, townhouses and condominiums, Assisted and Independent Care Facilities and Adult communities into the area. Between 1990 and 2000, households increased by nearly 91% from 7,498 to 14,310.

Abingdon – Riverside – Emmorton Demographic Profile 1990 – 2000

	1990	2000	Percent Change
Total Population	20,279	38,831	91.48%
Total Households	7,498	14,310	90.85%
Median Household Income (in current \$)	\$45,958	\$63,398	37.95%
Employment	4,185	12,952	209.49%
Population By Race / Hispanic Origin			
White	18,779	33,878	80.40%
Black	1,076	3,094	187.55%
American Indian/Alaska Native	46	77	67.39%
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	301	882	193.02%
Other	77	296	284.42%
Population of 2 or more Races	NA	604	NA
Hispanic Population	277	852	207.58%

Figure 43

Throughout the County, household income is up 37%. The median household income for this area grew 38% in the last decade from \$45,958 to \$63,398. Households in this community earning over \$100,000 a year increased by 1,475%. In addition, households in this community earning less than \$15,000 a year increased by 64%. Total employment in this area increased by 209% from 4,185 to 12,952.

Interchanges with I-95 are located at MD Route 543 and MD Route 24. While they have facilitated development of the area, they also direct traffic through the community, resulting in congestion on several key roads and intersections. MD Route 7 and U.S. Route 40 serve the southern portion of the community. MTA operates commuter bus routes to downtown Baltimore along U.S. Route 40 and along MD Route 24. Harford County Transportation Services operates bus number 2 and number 6 in this area. A park-and-ride-lot is located at MD Route 543 and MD Route 7 near the I-95 interchange.

Plan for the Area

The Abingdon-Riverside-Emmorton area has continued to experience more growth and change in recent years than any other part of the County. The demographics indicate that the Abingdon-Riverside-Emmorton community is equally alluring to seniors, families and young adults. To achieve the goal of building a sustainable community, the plan for the area should seek to balance the quality of life for its residents at each stage in life. The primary issues in this area remain securing adequate public facilities that are integrated within the community, establishing or reinforcing community identity, managing traffic congestion and truck traffic, promoting environmental stewardship, and ensuring compatibility of new development with the existing community area.

Securing locations and funding for public services and facilities for the existing and projected population continues to be a high priority. Locations must be chosen carefully within an area already hard-pressed to define its current "center" or focal point. If the provision of these facilities involves land, then sites must be acquired, or a strategy for future acquisition must be proposed in advance of build-out. This is especially critical along the MD Route 924/MD Route 24 corridors, where only a few larger sites remain undeveloped. Equally important to making the community attractive and sustainable, future development must be sensitive to its neighbors, stable community centers must be provided, identity must be reinforced, open land and natural areas must be preserved, and existing developed areas must remain desirable. All this will require cooperation and communication among the community, County government, and developers early in the development process.

Cultural and community-oriented facilities for this community of over 14,000 households should be encouraged. Recreation facilities and open space, which contribute to the long-term viability of communities and health of the residents, are also an issue of significant concern to this community and should be addressed as part of the development process. Within this community area, there is a need to provide adequate facilities for existing neighborhoods, as well as for the community at large.

In order to achieve compatibility, the most important components of the community's "character" need to be defined, such as relationships between buildings or notable architectural elements. Businesses and commercial areas should be compatible with the surrounding environment. The County should examine design approaches with the State Highway Administration to enhance the interchanges at I-95 and MD Route 24 and MD Route 543 as important visual "gateways" into the County and into the Development Envelope. Designation of the area bounded by I-95, Creswell Road, and James Run as Mixed Office will impact both traffic and development patterns at this interchange.

The MD Route 24/MD Route 924 corridors will continue to be studied in order to address congestion. The I-95 and the MD 24/924 interchange has gone through project planning and funding. Efforts to improve this intersection will continue. Strategies to enhance and continue the buffer plantings along MD Route 24 must also be implemented in coordination with adjacent property owners and the State.

Safety is an issue on MD Route 7 and may require additional improvements due to new and proposed development in and around the area. A significant change will occur as a result of the conversion of the proposed Village of Grays Run to an auto auction. There has also been an increase in truck traffic utilizing this corridor to reach industrial and business parks.

Safety and community convenience for pedestrians and bicyclists are also primary concerns. Pedestrian linkages and access to public spaces should be improved by providing sidewalks, safe road crossings, and hiker-biker trails. Road efficiency needs to be improved in a manner that does not increase automobile speeds through the community. Traffic calming measures should be examined and roads should be designed to serve the needs of local residents. The Tollgate Road connection will link Bel Air to I-95. Traffic circles will be used at strategic locations along this corridor. Public transit should be a viable option for this community. To help alleviate auto

congestion, additional bus routes, convenient transit stops with shelters, park and ride lots, and bike lanes should continue to be planned.

In addition to open space for recreation, maintaining natural open space which contains forested, stream, or wetland areas, is important to residents. These resource lands improve the physical environment by encouraging natural drainage, filtration and shade, and provide habitat required by wildlife. Protection of contiguous natural areas can also serve to buffer communities and preserve neighborhood identity. Within planned growth areas, the County must implement strategies which protect natural resources, prevent further damage, enhance natural assets which have suffered, or, at minimum, mitigate for foreseen adverse impacts. The fact that relatively few natural areas remain increases their value and importance within this community area.

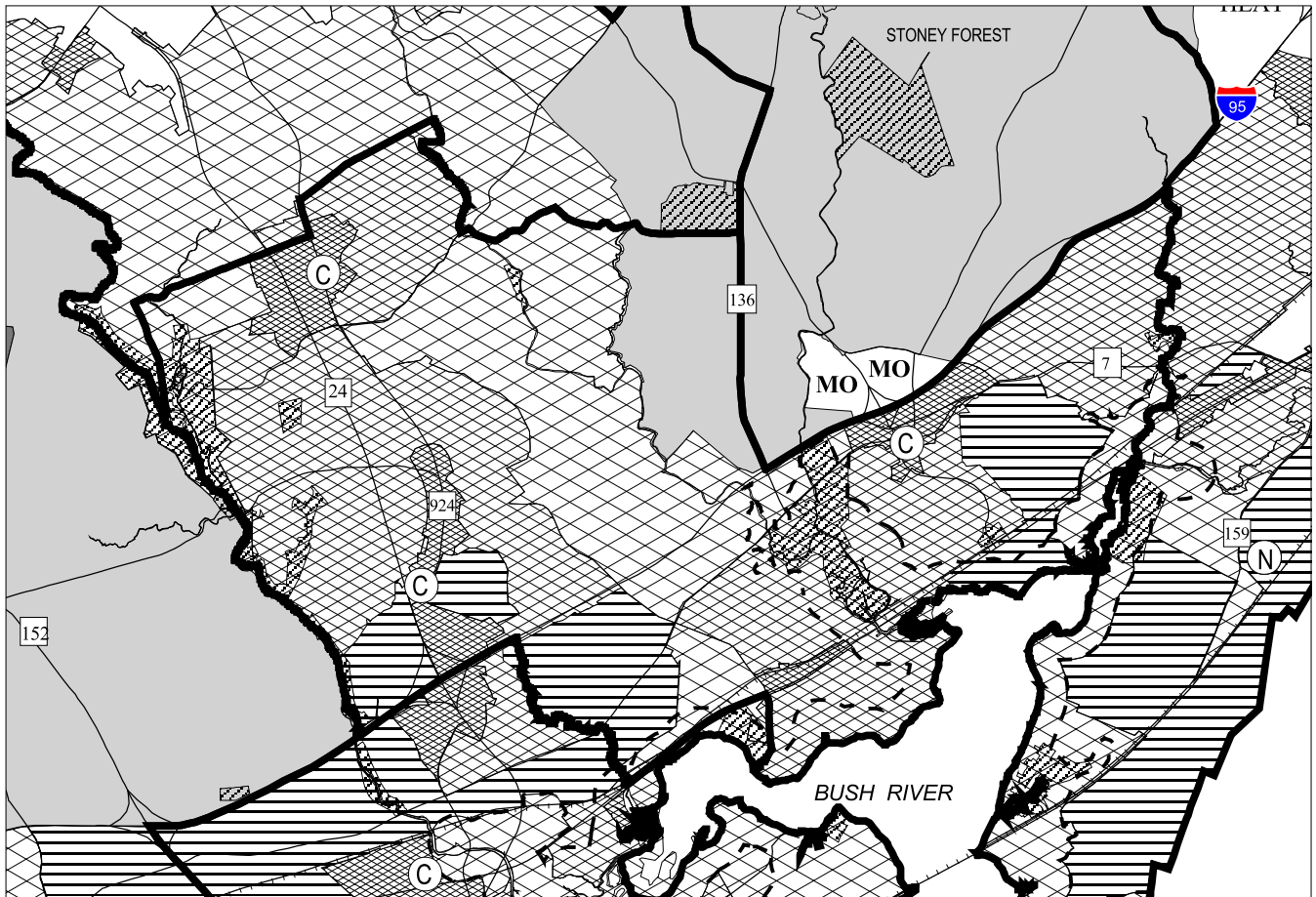
The Winters Run stream valley corridor has been designated as a greenway trail in both the Land Preservation and Recreation Plan and the Joppa-Joppatowne Community Plan. This corridor, which connects Harford Glen with the Bosley Conservancy, provides both recreational and environmental benefits. A trailhead will be developed along MD Route 7 to serve this trail network. As development is proposed for properties within this corridor, negotiations should occur between the County and property owners to ensure that the corridor remains intact via easements or enhanced buffers. The County should also pursue funding opportunities that would support the acquisition of key links along the corridor.

Proposed activities within historic Abingdon and the Bush Area should be carefully considered so as to protect the character and integrity of the traditional neighborhoods. Recognizing the importance of this area, these properties must be carefully evaluated for their potential for development. Proposed uses in the area should enhance the historical character and pattern of this area. However, all development should be planned so as not to encroach upon, or change, the historic nature of the area.

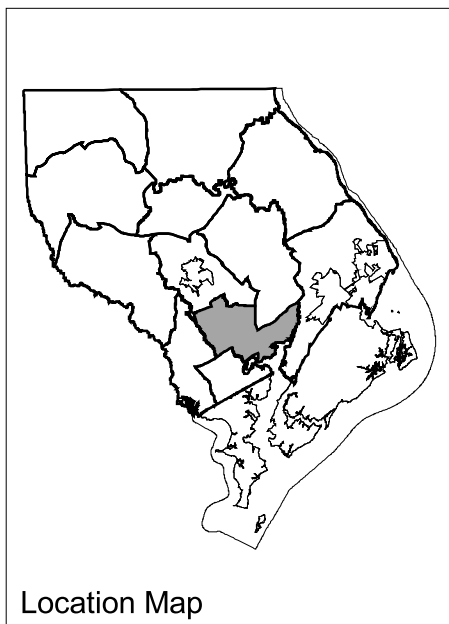
The Abingdon-Riverside-Emmorton community includes areas inside and outside the Development Envelope. There are also three designated Community Centers in this area that provide commercial and service oriented needs. Within the Development Envelope, areas presently defined for commercial use are deemed adequate to meet the immediate and foreseeable future retail and service needs of the community. No additional commercial zoning will be supported within this community area unless, upon further analysis, it is determined that there is a need for additional commercial zoning. Any additional zoning changes will also be subject to a technical analysis to ensure that the proposed change will not generate adverse impacts in the community.

North of I-95, on the west side of MD Route 136, is a designated agricultural area which is outside of the Development Envelope boundaries. Because there is sufficient capacity within the Development Envelope to address development needs for the life of this Plan, the Development Envelope will not be expanded in this area.

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Abingdon-Riverside-Emmorton Community Area



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| Agricultural | N Neighborhood Center |
| Rural Residential | C Community Center |
| Low Intensity | V Rural Village |
| Medium Intensity | T Town Center |
| High Intensity | Airport |
| Industrial/Employment | HCC Harford Community College |
| State and County Parks (over 10 acres) | HEAT Higher Education Applied Technology |
| MO Mixed Office | Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Boundary |
| Community Area Boundary | |

Figure 44 □

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